

6D a
613
2

M E M O I R S
O F
T H E L I F E
A N D A V I E W O F
T H E C H A R A C T E R
O F T H E L A T E
Dr. JOHN FOTHERGILL.

DRAWN UP AT THE DESIRE OF
THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

By GILBERT THOMPSON, M.D.
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,
AND SECRETARY TO THE SOCIETY.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND; AND SOLD
BY J. PHILLIPS, GEORGE-YARD, LOMBARD-STREET.

MDCCLXXXII.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

TO THE
MEDICAL SOCIETY,
LONDON.

GENTLEMEN,

AS you have been pleased to propose me for the service of writing some account of the life and character of our deceased colleague, Dr. JOHN FOTHERGILL, I feel an ambitious wish (however doubtful of success) to answer so respectable an appointment, and to compose something on the occasion not unworthy of his high deservings and your approbation.

B

If

If I have delayed it too long, from a just apprehension of difficulty in the attempt ; and if now, in the performance itself, I pursue the intention of inserting some minute circumstances, and enlarging in observation on others for the agreeable information, perhaps instruction, of some into whose hands it may fall, it becomes me to bespeak your favourable indulgence.

You will naturally reflect with me how soon we lost this distinguished member of the society. We had his company at our meeting, December 11, 1780, being the last time of his going abroad. He appeared amongst us with his usual cheerfulness, and activity, and with unremitted attention to the reputation and service of this society. The next morning a suppression of urine seized him, which on that day fortnight,

night, surmounting the best assistance of art, and the most affectionate and dutiful domestic attendance, terminated in his death; affording an example the more striking and instructive, as his station was conspicuous, of the uncertainty of life and its happiest connections, and how insufficient wealth, honours, human knowledge, and the friendship of the best men, may prove to alleviate the pains or protract the hour of mortality.

I learn from the Doctor's sister Ann Fothergill, who has obliged me with several kind informations, that he was born on the 8th of the month called March O.S. in the year 1712, at Carr-end in Yorkshire. His parents were John and Margaret Fothergill, both persons of approved integrity and piety, whose names are still dear to the

society of the people called Quakers, in which the Doctor received his education, and ever adhered to its principles. He was one of many children, but by no means the only one, who excelled in the gifts of understanding.

By a train of providential events, he was early in life under the kind care of his grandfather, Thomas Hough, a person of fortune in Cheshire. It was there he imbibed the first rudiments of learning; and in these childish days I am warranted, from some who remembered his gentle and innocent deportment, to give him this character: that to promote peace and social harmony amongst his school-fellows, to gain their love by an engaging behaviour, and to offend none, was his prevailing disposition. So much his education owed to those
amiable

amiable tempers which nature had first implanted.

At this school, and for the two last years at another at Sedberg in Yorkshire, under two masters of the first reputation for classical learning, he attained to a competent knowledge of the Latin tongue, and some acquaintance with the Greek; and though I have heard him say he was not careful enough to improve the latter, it is certain that after he left these schools he continued to cultivate his Latinity, so as to read authors in that language very familiarly, and to write in it, especially on subjects of physick and natural history, with sufficient fluency. But the bent of his mind was rather to general knowledge in its multifarious branches, than to the study of the learned languages, which he regarded

garded little further than as the vehicles of profitable information.

About the year 1728 he was put apprentice to Benjamin Bartlett at Bradford in Yorkshire, an apothecary of eminence, and of the most exemplary conduct. His house might be called the seminary of ingenious physicians. How happy to obtain such a master, when to imitate him was to be the gentleman in sentiment and manner, to be generous, good, and virtuous ! He had there the completest opportunities of knowing drugs and officinal preparations in their best and genuine state, of compounding them with neatness, of visiting patients, and laying the best foundation in an art to which his mind had an early and strong impulse. Such a timely initiation was undoubtedly of great use in
improving

improving that ease and *hability* in the practice of physick so natural to him, and so often admired.

Genius unfolds itself at different periods of youth. His began to give very flattering expectations under the precepts of this worthy master. His sensible conduct and behaviour attracted the notice and even admiration of some considerable persons in the neighbourhood, and gave them clear presages of a future great character.

After having discharged the duties of his apprenticeship with fidelity and reputation, he next removed to Edinburgh, to study physick in the colleges of medicine, the Doctors Monro, Alston, Rutherford, Sinclair, and Plummer, being then professors, all of them pupils of the celebrated Dr. Boerhaave;

and who after his decease filled their learned departments with such honour, that professorial knowledge and eloquence seemed to have migrated from Leyden to Edinburgh.

At this university he pursued his studies, as the wiser part of pupils will ever do, with serious attention and a purpose of being well grounded in those principles of science, preparatory to a conscientious care of life and health. He was one of the few who engaged the particular regard of the professors ever quick in discovering superior merit. With these he afterwards cultivated in occasional letters a friendly communication of improving sentiments. I have heard several of them in their public lectures speak of him in terms of sincere esteem, and equally commend his professional ac-

com-

complishments and the integrity of his life. In this place it may not be improper to mention what I once gathered from a conversation with him, that, previous to his entrance on the practice, he took especial care to be master of the diagnostic signs, and the most approved methods in the treatment of diseases, whose attacks are sudden and instantaneous, and their progress too quick for deliberation; a wise precaution deserving to be imitated.

During his attendance at these colleges he formed some very happy and advantageous friendships with students of promising parts, who became afterwards so many ornaments to the profession, as the late Dr. Alexander Ruffel, who wrote the History of Aleppo; Dr. Cleghorn, lately professor

feffor in anatomy in the univerfity of Dublin; and Dr. Cuming of Dorchester, ftill living to deplore his lofs. At length he took the degree of doctor of phyfick at the fame univerfity in the year 1736, and the fame year came to his place of fixed refidence in London : it may be pleafing to fome to know that it was on the 29th of October.

After the Doctor came to this city, his firft concern was to enter himfelf phyfician's pupil at St. Thomas's Hofpital, the practice of which he diligently attended for two years.

In the fpring of the year 1740 he finifhed his education by his travels through fome parts of France and Germany : of thefe he kept a journal, indicating a genius turned for general obfervation and curiofity.

Returning

Returning to London after a few months he now applied himself with persevering diligence to the practice of physick. His business for some years was mostly confined to that class of people whose pay is praise and recommendation ; so that I have heard him say he has often traversed the outskirts of the city, from morning to night, and returned home without having taken one fee. But he patiently continued to discharge his duty to the poor, to improve these opportunities, and to sow seeds which were to produce a plentiful harvest. On this occasion it deserves to be commemorated, that he continued to give his advice to the poor freely as long as health permitted ; and this was done through a course of many years extensive practice, when it could only be

be supposed that his motive was benevolence.

I remember a friend of the Doctor's, who had an early intimacy with him, observing, that his progress in the business of his profession was not rapid, being retarded by a natural reserve and modesty, which at that time appeared to himself to be invincible. But encreasing years and practice, and conversation with men, gave him courage, and insensibly formed his manners into an easy familiarity.

In the year 1746 he added consequence to his medical character, by obtaining the degree of licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, London, after having passed the usual examinations.

Such were his gradual advances, till an event took place which suddenly

denly raised his character above mediocrity, and, by introducing him to popular fame, multiplied his opportunities of doing good. For that remarkable epidemick, the putrid sore throat, or *Angina maligna* (making its first appearance in London in the years 1739 and 1740 in a few families, and afterwards shewing itself again in 1742, though not generally) in the years 1746, 1747 and 1748 spread with such alarming frequency and fatality, as engaged the most serious attention of physicians, and of Dr. Fothergill in particular. Experience, improved by sagacious observation, enabled him in 1748 to favour the publick with an elegant and accurate history of this disease, entitled, “ An Account of the putrid Sore Throat.” This treatise (which I will venture to call

call his master-piece) was greatly esteemed by the faculty, and read with avidity, and has now passed several editions. The fame of the author and his work extended to foreign parts; and the year after it was published the Doctor received a letter from Mons. La Chapelle of Paris, informing him that he had translated the work into French, and sent him six copies of the translation. In this letter the French gentleman observes, that the symptoms of the disease are so admirably described, that a translation of the work was esteemed at Paris a most acceptable present to the publick. And truly they had too much occasion for such useful instructions, as the same distemper had already broken out in several parts of France, especially at Paris, where it committed
great

great ravages. In the mean time their physicians appeared totally unacquainted with its nature, and the proper method of treating it. Eight young ladies in a convent of that city were attacked with this disease: two of them died before there was time for observation, or even the suspicion of a new distemper; three died as it was thought by improper treatment, and the remaining three resisted the violence of the malady. This event struck a terror through that city, and a rumour was propagated that the pestilence was in the convent. Dissections discovered to them the seat and nature of the disease; and the morbid appearances were perfectly conformable to Dr. Fothergill's description of the symptoms.

Concerning

Concerning a treatise so well known, it may be sufficient to add, that if improvements have been since made on the Doctor's method of cure by celebrated writers who succeeded him ; if the antiseptic virtues of the Bark in so great a tendency to putrefaction have been happily discovered ; if cautious and well-timed purgatives, and even bleeding, have sometimes had their service ; these are the natural consequences of advancing experience, and the variable genius of epidemics. And it may further be considered, that the Doctor had to combat with powerful prejudices, in favour of general evacuations, and therefore, that he might effectually oppose them, inclined to the less dangerous extreme.

And now, his practice encreasing with his reputation, and extending to

a variety of cases and situations in this metropolis and its environs; he was qualified to favour the publick with a monthly account of the weather and diseases of London, which he first began to publish in the Gentleman's Magazine for April, 1751, and regularly continued for several years: a work worthy of its author, carried on with judgement, and interspersed with such prudent cautions, and such interesting information, as could not fail being useful to inferior practitioners.

But while these present benefits attended his humane endeavours, the great design of them remained unanswered. The Doctor meant to excite many other experienced physicians in different parts to imitate the example; that, by a comparison of their united observations, new truths in the science

of healing, salutiferous to future ages, might be discovered and established. Disappointed in his views, and his time being much engrossed in practice, he discontinued the publication in the beginning of the year 1756.

In 1754 he was chosen honorary fellow of the Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh, at the request of Doctor John Rutherford, President; and in 1763, at the earnest instance of some of its leading members, offered himself to be elected fellow of the Royal Society, and was accepted.

He was also a member of the Royal Academy of Medicine at Paris, having received that honour at its first establishment.

I must now go back a little, as to the order of time, in taking notice that in the year 1762 the Doctor purchased

chased an estate at Upton in Essex, containing about sixty acres of land, and between five and six acres of garden-ground. Here his active mind had ample room to expatiate and indulge itself in its favourite pursuits, and soon discovered what improvements and even metamorphoses an elegant fancy could make. In launching out into the extraordinary expence which must attend so large an undertaking, and encrease with its progress towards maturity, his great design was, to enrich his garden and grounds, and from thence his own nation, with many rare and new productions of the vegetable kingdom; such as might by their beautiful variety embellish our gardens; by their curious structure and properties be objects of scientific speculation, or (what was his primary intention) be

subservient to the interests of this country, and to the common good.

With these views he spared no cost in establishing a universal correspondence with almost every part of the habitable globe ; and his wishes happily succeeded in procuring a vast variety of plants and seeds from China, and the East and West Indies, from Siberia and the Alpes, North America, and the new-discovered Islands, &c. and not a few from Africa, that stupendous garden of vegetable beauty. And that he might have every chance for success in the propagating of new plants amongst us ; he used to commit some of each sort, or of their seeds, to the care and management of his friend the late James Gordon, of Mile-End, gardener, a man no less remarkable for simplicity and uprightness than

than for his unrivalled knowledge in horticulture.

His garden, formed upon this extensive plan, and yearly improving by large supplies of the more rare indigenous plants, and a profusion of new exotics, arrived at length to that pitch of excellence, as, in the opinion of the most competent judges, to be esteemed the second in Europe: the Royal Gardens at Kew alone deserving the pre-eminence*.

At this period the Doctor's engagements, in the way of his profession, poured in so thick upon him, and took such possession of his hours, that while

* It gives me pleasure to grace this work in making mention of the fine Botanic Garden at Islington, belonging to Dr. Pitcairn, President of the Royal College of Physicians, who, with Dr. Fothergill, had the honour of supplying the Royal Gardens at Kew with several new plants, and receiving others from thence, and from each other's gardens, to the great improvement of them all.

his garden was every day inviting him by new objects of improvement and gratification; he may be almost said to have been tantalized by its pleasures. In the day-time he was either at home attending to the complaints of a long succession of patients, or visiting them abroad with the utmost frugality of time; and late at evening so much taken up in answering consulting letters from distant parts, and often from abroad, that he could only borrow a few hours in a week to survey his garden, and those hours to be repaid by greater assiduity.

As this pleasant recess was too remote to be often visited, so it was too much within the sphere of action to be a refuge from care and importunity, which yet the exhausted state of his strength and spirits required. This
 he

he determined upon ; and the situation of Lee-Hall, near Middlewich, in Cheshire, offered itself to his wishes ; a county that had been before the scene of his youthful studies and innocent pastimes. To this place he first retired in the summer of the year 1765, and continued to make his anniversary retreat as long as he lived, where he commonly spent eight or nine weeks in the latter part of summer, so as to return to London in the beginning of October.

In such a state of comparative quietude, he had the advantage of perceiving the depredations that time and laborious exertions were making on his constitution far more sensibly than he had done in the career of business ; but that which reminded him of the decays of nature, in a good measure

repaired them ; and it was very observable how much he was improved on his return to the city in complexion, cheerfulness, and health, by such an escape from hourly solicitude, the benefit of a salubrious air, and the pleasing novelty of his employments, For in this retirement he was far from neglecting that proper use of time which became so well-informed an understanding. It was here he pursued his plan, and enlarged his ideas of horticulture, and had the pleasure of observing the peculiar effects of a new air, soil and climate on vegetation, and how some plants and shrubs flourished with a luxuriance never noticed before *. It was

* This was most remarkable in the China-aster. The Doctor told me, that in the summer of 1780 he counted a hundred and thirty flowers growing on one stem.

here he prepared for your inspection some of those essays and papers that form no inconsiderable part of the volumes already published by the society, and several other papers now before you, that received the finishing hand from himself. And I know, Gentlemen, on this occasion you will permit me to say, that all possible respect will be paid to his posthumous labours, and no part of them withheld from the public that are worthy of their author, and may contribute to the beneficial design of this institution *.

Nor was he unmindful in this retired situation of the great concern of

* As the Doctor did not always write with the same felicity of style and weight of sentiment: this society, from a true regard to his wishes and reputation as an author, thinks it right to suppress some of his manuscript essays, which had been hastily conceived, and were too incorrect, and of matter too light to obtain his own approbation.

life,

life, to make this probationary state a passage to a better country, nor without a strong apprehension (as I gather from some of his letters) of his approaching dissolution; and of the swiftness of time that steals by so many with silent unheeded flight; and his desire to improve his remaining days to the most important ends appears in one of the letters with which he favoured me, where he complains that his friends, whom he esteemed, and business, which he sought to avoid, rob him of his time;

*Consiliumque morantur agendi gnaviter id quod
Æquè pauperibus prodest locupletibus æquè
Æquè neglectum pueris senibusque nocebit.* HOR.

But it is something to cherish good intentions, if they cannot be desirably accomplished.

In

In the year 1767 the Doctor removed from his long-known residence in White Hart Court, Grace-church Street, to his house in Harpur Street, near Red-Lion Square, Holbourn. The commodiousness of this new situation soon presented him with a very extensive scene of business at the west-end of the town in families of rank and fortune, and several of the most respectable nobility, who have given strong testimonies to his abilities, candour, and disinterestedness; and at the same time his former connexions and friendships, his honour and gratitude, called for his daily attendance in the city. By this means, that circle of business, which he might have wished to contract, was greatly enlarged, and encreasing labour and fatigue entailed on him to the end of life.

It

life, to make this probationary state a passage to a better country, nor without a strong apprehension (as I gather from some of his letters) of his approaching dissolution; and of the swiftness of time that steals by so many with silent unheeded flight; and his desire to improve his remaining days to the most important ends appears in one of the letters with which he favoured me, where he complains that his friends, whom he esteemed, and business, which he sought to avoid, rob him of his time;

Consiliumque morantur agendi gnaviter id quod
 Æquè pauperibus prodest locupletibus æquè
 Æquè neglectum pueris senibusque nocebit. HOR.

But it is something to cherish good intentions, if they cannot be desirably accomplished.

In

In the year 1767 the Doctor removed from his long-known residence in White Hart Court, Grace-church Street, to his house in Harpur Street, near Red-Lion Square, Holbourn. The commodiousness of this new situation soon presented him with a very extensive scene of business at the west-end of the town in families of rank and fortune, and several of the most respectable nobility, who have given strong testimonies to his abilities, candour, and disinterestedness; and at the same time his former connexions and friendships, his honour and gratitude, called for his daily attendance in the city. By this means, that circle of business, which he might have wished to contract, was greatly enlarged, and encreasing labour and fatigue entailed on him to the end of life.

It

It remains, that I now subjoin to the foregoing imperfect memoirs of the life of our late colleague, some outlines of his character. To represent it with truth and justice, and on a subject so copious and so diversified, to prescribe necessary limits is an arduous undertaking; and the difficulty encreased, when the writer must address himself to Gentlemen long acquainted, and often conversant with the Doctor, as well in a social intercourse, as in the line of his profession. He makes the attempt with diffidence; and, if he had not experienced that candour accompanies the best understandings, should fear your judgment.

The general voice of his acquaintance agrees that he was a man endowed with many virtues and extraordinary abilities. His religious principles,

ciples, conduct, and services, made him highly respectable in his own society ; at the same time that the chastity and integrity of his life and manners were universally known. His understanding was comprehensive, quick, and lively, present to the most sudden occasions, and very rarely embarrassed. His mind was of that versatility, that he could easily break off from important concerns, and enter into a familiar and pleasant conversation with all the indifference of a man of leisure ; and as easily resume the variety of his serious engagements, as if they had never been interrupted. On these accounts he was most happily turned for the clear and ready conducting of business ; perhaps, in so short a time, none could do it better, or with less mixture of the errors of humanity.

His elocution was easy, and his language genteel, not without energy. There was a charm in his converse and address that affected some with a transport of admiration, and commanded the high regard and opinion of most who employed him; whilst, by a discreet uniformity of conduct, he so fixed the capriciousness of mankind, that he was not apt to forfeit the esteem he had once acquired.

In his ordinary discourse, though averse from intemperate mirth, he was cheerfully grave, and affable with dignity; a strict observer of decorum, and (as often as familiarity allowed) treated the neglect of it with a quick resentment.

Where he professed a friendship, he was faithful and sincere: neither adversity nor death could dissolve it.

it *. Not only his good wishes, but his munificence was largely extended to his friends; and his well-adapted presents were offered with that easy politeness, as to be received with pleasure and without confusion.

He had a just sense of his intellectual powers, and was solicitous to improve them to the utmost, so that he suffered no faculty to waste itself in indolence, but exercised them with vigour, and they shone in the using.

Why need I mention, that, as a physician, he stood high in reputation in this metropolis, throughout these kingdoms, and in foreign nations?

* This was remarkably exemplified in his invariable kindness to the late ingenious, but unfortunate, Dr. Knight; his bounty to him in times of great difficulty and distress; and, after his decease, in his tender regard and protection of his character: for character is wont to sink with mens' fortunes.

I mean not to single out his popularity as the subject of panegyrick. Far less abilities, assisted by vain ambition and bold pretensions, may draw the deluded many to wonder after them; but a better praise rewarded his unaffected merits. He possessed the esteem, the approbation, the confidence, of the good and wise; was numbered with them, and had the friendship of the most distinguished among the faculty, and in the several branches of science.

The Doctor made the art of healing his principal study, and had an ardent zeal for its honour and advancement; and was commonly among the foremost to make trial of new medicines that came recommended by experience, or their known sensible qualities; nor did they al-
ways

ways disappoint his expectations. A prudent cautiousness might be traced throughout his practice. Observation and right reason had taught him that the mischiefs of temerity may easily exceed its advantages.

His attention to the diet of his patients was remarkable; and in this, as well as in the pharmaceutick part, he took ingenious pains to unite the grateful and the salutary. His medicines were judiciously selected; the whole compass of them was easily comprehended; and may we not say, that he improved the method of prescribing in simplicity, elegance, and propriety?

In the families of the sick his general deportment was becoming and graceful, commanding respect, and equally adapted to gain the judgment and affections; nor is it easy to

D

forget

forget with what placid chearfulness, with what sympathy, with what hope-inspiring language, he often addressed them. Certainly, in distempers more immediately connected with the mind, this was no small advantage to the efficacy of his prescriptions; though an exception to the maxim of Celsus *, and to Virgil's description of the art †.

How shall my pen equalize his deserts as a citizen of the world, of a capacious soul flowing with the most liberal beneficence, which he constantly exercised in promoting schemes of publick utility, the improvement of arts and sciences, and the encouragement of those who pursued these studies with diligence and capacity? His great acquisitions in business were

* Morbi non eloquentiâ curantur sed medicamentis.

† Scire potestates herbarum usumque medendi
Maluit, et mutas agitare inglorius artes.

far too small for his generous purposes. It sometimes happens that rare endowments of nature are either buried in sloth and privacy, obscured by modesty, or depressed by misfortune. Persons of this description he was assiduous in finding out, and animated to worthy actions and ingenious performances. The world of letters had been deprived of several excellent productions, had he not stimulated the ambition and industry of their authors, and taught them to set a proper value on their superior talents; and he deserves the particular thanks of the publick that the History of Aleppo, and that of the diseases of Minorca, ever entertained or instructed them.

In those wonderful discoveries exhibited in the history of Corallines,

and other marine productions, by the ingenious John Ellis, F. R. S. the Doctor was very assisting by his generosity, his communications, and his friendships; and in the curious historical account of coffee by the same author, the reader may see the part he took in that work of national concernment.

As Natural History, and especially the study of Botany, was his prevailing amusement; he constantly employed, not only those artists who excelled, but others who aspired to excel, in producing exact and highly finished drawings of plants and flowers; at once facilitating the knowledge of that science, and adding to its delightfulness. He had also formed a design to obtain accurate draughts of all the rare plants of our

own nation, but did not live to see it perfected *.

It

* I doubt not but the reader will be pleased to find the preceding account and observations enlarged and improved in the following note, for which my thanks are due in the most respectful manner to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, and to Dr. Solander.

As his more laborious hours were dedicated to the health of his countrymen, so even his leisure was given up in various ways to the promotion and increase of real science.

Of this the large collections he made in Natural History bear sufficient testimony, particularly in shells, corals, and insects. But, above all, the remembrance of his botanick garden at Upton will ever be fresh in the minds of all lovers of that science.

At an expence seldom undertaken by an individual, and with an ardour that was visible in the whole of his conduct, he procured from all parts of the world a great number of the rarest plants, and protected them in the amplest buildings which this or any other country has seen.

He liberally proposed rewards to those whose circumstances and situations in life gave them opportunities of bringing hither plants which might be ornamental, and probably useful to this country, or her colonies; and as liberally paid these rewards to all that served him. If

It must not be omitted, that the Doctor generously patronized and super-

the troubles of war had permitted, we should have had the cortex Winteranus, &c. &c. introduced by his means into this country; and also the bread-fruit, mangasteen, &c. into the West-India islands. For each of these and many others he had fixed a proper premium. In conjunction with the Earl of Tankerville, Dr. Pitcairn, and myself, he sent over a person to Africa, who is still employed upon the coast of that country for the purpose of collecting plants and specimens.

Those whose gratitude for restored health prompted them to do what was acceptable to their benefactor, were always informed by him that presents of rare plants chiefly attracted his attention, and would be more acceptable to him than the most generous fees. How many unhappy men, enervated by the effects of hot climates, where their connections had placed them, found health on their return home at that cheap purchase!

What an infinite number of plants he obtained by these means, the large collection of drawings he left behind will amply testify; and that they were equalled by nothing but royal munificence, at this time largely bestowed upon the Botanick Gardens at Kew. In my own opinion, no other garden in Europe, royal, or of a subject, had nearly so many scarce and valuable plants.

That

perintended the great botanical work projected by John Millar, being an illustration of the Linnæan System, with very correct copper-plates, of which the great Linnæus lived to see some specimens, and received them with the utmost commendations.

For many years he was engaged in making a valuable collection of shells, corals, and other marine productions. Such a curiosity is very compatible

That science might not suffer a loss when a plant he had cultivated should die, he liberally paid the best artist the country afforded to draw the new ones as they came to perfection; and so numerous were they at last, that he found it necessary to employ more artists than one, in order to keep pace with their increase *. His garden was known all over Europe, and foreigners of all ranks asked, when they came hither, permission to see it; of which Dr. Solander and myself are sufficient witnesses, from the many applications that have been made through us for that permission.

* He left behind him above 1200 drawings, chiefly on vellum, by Ehret, Taylor, Harris, Miller, and Miss Ann Lee, which have been lately purchased for the Empress of Russia.

with dignity of understanding, while it tends to the enlargement of natural knowledge, and presents to the contemplative beholder a compendious display of the wonders of creation ! As in this design, as well as in others, his views were great and philosophical, so they were nobly answered, and, as far as possible, perpetuated, by his offering, in his last will, to Dr. William Hunter, our respectable President, an advantageous purchase of these rarities. They now constitute a part of his magnificent museum.

A representation of his character would be essentially defective, if it concluded without some view of his conduct through the most trying vicissitudes of life. Though he long flourished in prosperity and in the
public

public estimation, and though exposed to all that superlative praise which exalted characters attract, both from flattery that is selfish and insidious, and from admiring friendship; yet he gave not way to dangerous presumption, nor forgot to be condescending: the tenour of his virtuous course was not altered. But it was in the shade of affliction that his virtues appeared with peculiar lustre. To one long accustomed to view the fair side of mankind, how aggravated the distress to see the prospect reversed; to suffer the sharp arrows of envy; to find his words and honest intentions (expressed in the openness of sincerity) strangely misapprehended, and worked up into a storm very threatening to so fair a reputation; to perceive a change in
the

the affectionate disposition of some former friends, and for signal instances of kindness to be rewarded with the basest ingratitude. On these occasions some of his particular friends observed, with increasing veneration, his patience and magnanimity; how he rose superior to all discouragements, and persisted with unshaken resolution in the kindest acts of humanity, and in the duties of a good life.

When under bodily affliction, he was a shining example of patience and fortitude. I did not see him in his last illness; but when about two years before, he was affected with the same distemper, I paid him a visit, he gave me an account of his complaint, and the methods that had been pursued to relieve him, and was then
uncertain

uncertain of the event. I have heard him speak with great concern of the dangerous situation of his patients; he related his own with wonderful composure.

His well-spent life towards its painful conclusion was crowned with resignation to the Divine Will, and the assurance of a happy immortality *.

* His death was universally regretted as a publick loss. I have seen several letters of condolance, written to his sister on the occasion, by persons of excellent understanding, and of souls too congenial with his own to be insensible of his worth; and shall take the liberty to present the reader with one of them written by an eminent physician in the country.

Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit,
Nulli flebilior quam tibi.

Hox,

“ Dear Mrs. FOTHERGILL,

“ I do not fear to encrease your grief by this early
“ address, nor to recall to your memory the very af-
“ flicting dispensation which you have lately experi-
“ enced, as I am well convinced it has never once been
“ absent from your mind since it happened; but I can
“ no longer defer to mingle my tears with yours, and

“ most

“ most sincerely condole with you on the signal loss
 “ which you have sustained. Your loss, it must be
 “ confessed, is incomparably the greatest; but you are
 “ by no means the only sufferer—all his friends, his
 “ acquaintances, the publick—all partake of it, and
 “ share it with you.

“ As to myself, I feel it deeply. Forty-seven years
 “ have now run their course since I had first the happi-
 “ ness of his acquaintance; during which long tract of
 “ time we have maintained an uninterrupted warm
 “ mutual and disinterested friendship. Often have I
 “ been benefited by his counsel and advice; always
 “ happy and improved by his conversation and corre-
 “ spondence. The regard and kindness with which he
 “ distinguished me, has been ever my pleasure and my
 “ boast. May the Almighty sanctify this severe afflic-
 “ tion to you! and may we all profit by so eminent an
 “ example! Great as your grief must be, you have
 “ every consolation that can alleviate a misfortune of
 “ this kind. No one lived a more innocent and a more
 “ useful life. No one was ever more beloved and re-
 “ spected while living; none have died more universally
 “ regretted. I loved and esteemed him highly alive;
 “ I shall ever respect his memory. Submission to the
 “ Will of Heaven we all know is ever our duty under
 “ every afflicting dispensation. The reason is very plain;
 “ of this our judgment is easily convinced, but the
 “ practice is not quite so easy. We cannot forget the
 “ pleasure we enjoyed in the possession of such blessings;
 “ we look back with regret, and are deeply sensible of
 “ the present void. Natural affection will have its
 “ course,

“ course, and it requires time to sooth the passions. Of
 “ all the taxes on humanity, this is the greatest. —
 “ Both on your account, and from the near relation in
 “ which you stand to the respected deceased, I must
 “ ever interest myself cordially in your welfare. I am
 “ far from expecting, nay, I do not even wish, you to
 “ take any notice of this letter soon. The present state
 “ of your mind cannot admit of it: but hereafter,
 “ when time has mellowed your grief, and blunted the
 “ edge of your present poignant affliction, I will hope
 “ to hear, either from yourself, or by the hands of some
 “ of your friends, of your state of health and situation.
 “ I hope I need not say, that if in any respect I can be
 “ made useful to you, it will afford me a sensible plea-
 “ sure. I commit you to the consolation and guidance
 “ of the Almighty; and remain, with sincere regard
 “ and esteem,

“ Dear Mrs. FOTHERGILL’S

“ Faithful and respectful friend,

“ Dorchester,
 “ Jan. 10, 1781.

“ W. CUMING.”

[Faint, illegible handwritten notes]

